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DESCRIPTION

DU SUPERBE

VIOLON DE STRADIVARIUS

dit "LE MERCURE"

DESCRIPTION

OF THE SPLENDID

VIOLIN OF STRADIVARIUS

called "LE MERCURE"

BRUXELLES
Imprimerie Henri Diez
18, Rue de l'Epargne, 18

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can be at all possible. The fact of an unsuspected Stradivari violin having been found in a house belonging to a county family within the last two years, makes one long for a series of exhibitions of violins in the hope that many masterpieces of the violin tribe lying *perdus* in this country may be brought to light.

The following advertisement has lately appeared in "The Times," and has raised considerable curiosity in the violin world:—

GENUINE Stradivarius Violin, the property of a gentleman, for sale; guaranteed perfect in all parts. For full particulars and price, write W. D. A., 20, Willing's, 162, Piccadilly, W.

Curiosity has been excited to know who W.D.A. was, and what instrument it was. The first thought in the minds of the charitable was that it was, perhaps, some unfortunate fiddler who is obliged, in consequence of these hard times, to sell his Strad. However, our readers will be relieved to hear that this is not so. The violin is the property of a distinguished violinist, or, at any rate, he has been offering it for sale; and a letter signed W. D. A., giving a description of the instrument and naming the sum of £700 for it, is in this gentleman's handwriting. Any good violinist should be able to add considerably to his income by dealing in violins. In fact, with the opportunities afforded him for showing off the tone and other features of an instrument the dealer should not be in it with him. We are glad to be able to tell our readers something about this violin, and to bring under notice the fact that the price now named is considerably less than what has been asked for it. This, then, is the golden opportunity of the buyer who has been watching for his chance! The violin first appeared before the public in the exhibition of musical instruments at the Royal Aquarium, Westminster, in October, 1892, where it was shown under the fantastic title of "The Mercury," by Messrs. Paul Bailly and Son, the French violin-makers who have, we understand, recently left this country. £1,500, we believe, was then asked for the instrument, but its public exhibition does not seem to have brought forth any buyer. We should be inclined to think that the asking of such an outrageous sum for the instrument simply frightened all would-be buyers away. We may mention that the owner of the violin was a Mr. J. Williams, who bought it from a violin dealer named Mougenot, in Brussels; and no doubt influenced by the successful sale of the "Ames" Strad for £860 by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson in the spring of last year, he was tempted to try his luck later on in the same sale room. He quite overlooked

Antonio Stradivarius
Cremonensis fecibat anno 1688.

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Superbe violon de Stradivarius

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Superbe violon de Stradivarius

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Je crois être utile et agréable à tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la lutherie ancienne et principalement aux œuvres du grand maître luthier de Crémone, qui avait nom Antoine Stradivarius, en leur faisant connaître un des plus beaux spécimens sorti de ses mains et portant la date de 1688.

LE MERCURE

ANTOINE STRADIVARIUS. CRÉMONE 1688.

DESCRIPTION

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Superbe violon de Stradivarius

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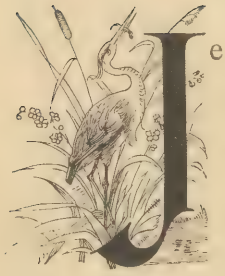

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LE MERCURE

ANTOINE STRADIVARIUS. CRÉMONE 1688.

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Splendid violin of Stradivarius

called "THE MERCURE,"

I think it will be useful and agreeable to anybody who takes an interest in the ancient lutery and principally in the works of the great lute-maker of Cremona, Anton Stradivarius, to know one of the most beautiful specimen he made, and dated from 1688.

Ce violon est de la seconde époque du maître, de celle où fut créé le fameux Tuscan Stradivarius, propriété de MM. Hill de Londres. Il a la même finesse de travail de ce dernier et ne le cède en rien, tant comme beauté de vernis que comme sonorité, à d'autres violons de Stradivarius faits à une époque de sa vie qu'on considère souvent comme plus glorieuse, et de plus, la conservation en est parfaite.

Le magnifique vernis jaune, brun doré, conservé dans presque toutes les parties de l'instrument, a tout son éclat et son brillant comme s'il sortait des mains du luthier.

Depuis le commencement de ce siècle, ce beau Stradivarius se trouvait dans la famille du vicomte de Bioley, — grand industriel de Verviers. — Le vicomte le légua à son petit-fils, le comte van der Straeten-Ponthoz de Bruxelles. Ce dernier propriétaire, n'étant pas

LE MERCURE

ANTOINE STRADIVARIUS. CRÉMONE 1688.

This violin is from the second epoch of the master, when he made the famous Tuscan Stradivarius, which belongs to MMrs. Hill, from London. Its work is as fine as the latter's and is as good as all the violins which he made during a period of his life considered as more glorious with respect to the beauty of the varnish and the sonority; besides, it is perfectly preserved.

The splendid yellow, gilt brown varnish, which is preserved in almost all the parts of the instrument, possesses its whole brilliancy just like if it was coming out of the lute-maker's hands.

Since the beginning of the present century, this beautiful Stradivarius belonged to one of the greatest families of Belgium (Viscount de Bioley, a great manufacturer of Verviers). The viscount left it to his grandson, the count van der Straeten-Ponthoz, from Brussels. This proprietor

violoniste, ce Stradivarius resta pendant de longues années sans être *joué,* sauf à de rares exceptions par feu le Prince de Chimay, qui seul eut l'honneur de faire vibrer les cordes de ce bel instrument.

Ces circonstances, ignorées du monde des amateurs, nous disent pourquoi on ne pouvait donner des renseignements sur ce qu'était devenu le *Mercure,* comme on les donnait sur d'autres instruments connus du maître.

Par un heureux hasard, j'ai été appelé à examiner ce violon et je n'ai pas hésité à entrer immédiatement en négociations pour acquérir ce chef-d'œuvre, négociations qui ont abouti en ma faveur.

Je suis par conséquent devenu propriétaire de ce beau spécimen de lutherie de l'Ecole de Crémone, et, dès aujourd'hui, je le mets à la disposition de ceux qui désirent voir et entendre ce magnifique violon.

not being a violonist, the instrument was a long while without anybody playing upon it, except seldom the late Prince of Chimay, who alone was admitted to play upon it.

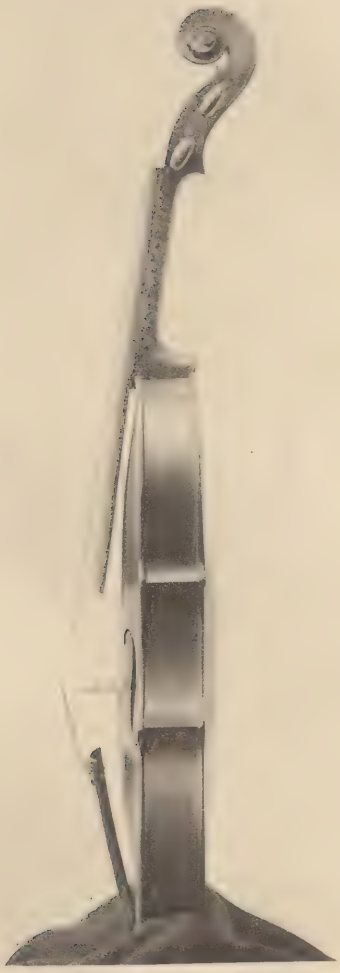
Those circumstances being unknown by amators, explain why any indication about the Mercure could not be given, as about other instruments of the master.

By a happy chance, I was called to examine that violin, and I instantly bought the master-piece.

Consequently I became the possessor of that splendid specimen of lutery from the Cremona's school and, from this moment, I keep it to the service of any one who likes to see and hear the magnificent instrument.

En dehors du manche et de la barre, changements que tous les violons anciens doivent absolument subir aujourd'hui à cause de l'élévation progressive du diapason, le " *Mercure Stradivari* „ n'a jamais eu *aucune réparation* à supporter.

Georges MOUGENOT,
Luthier du Conservatoire Royal
de BRUXELLES.



LE MERCURE

ANTOINE STRADIVARIUS. CRÉMONE 1688.

The Mercure Stradivari has never been repaired, except the neck and the bar, and these reparations are necessary at this time for all the ancient violins for reason of the progressive elevation of the diapason.

Georges MOUGENOT,
Lute-maker to the Royal Conservatory of BRUSSELS.

Voici les dimensions de l'instrument prises sur l'original :

Longueur totale d'une extrémité d'un bord à l'autre	0m, 358 mm
Longueur des C.	0m, 079 —
Largeur à la partie supérieure . .	0m, 165 —
— — inférieure . .	0m, 208 —
— des *ff*	0m, 117 —
Diapason	0m, 196 —
Hauteur des éclisses	0m, 031 —